

William Hall House
429 Second Street
Portsmouth
Scioto County
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2309

HABS
OHIO,
73- PORT,
9-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
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Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM HALL HOUSE

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Location: 429 Second Street, Portsmouth, Scioto County, Ohio

Significance: The William Hall House is an example of the vernacular architecture of the region.

Description: The William Hall House is larger than the typical half-I house and has a centrally positioned doorway. Like the half-I house, however, it shows three openings at each level rather than the five levels typical of the full I house. The Hall House includes a separate kitchen to the back which forms an L. The walls are brick.

Vernacular houses, such as the William Hall house, are typical of the folk housing which developed in this region in the first part of the nineteenth century in Ohio. These single-pile, two-story, brick houses show three or five windows across the front, forming a half-I, or I house, and, typically, show no windows on the sides.

History: The William Hall house was built around 1840 in one of Ohio's oldest river communities. The confluence of the Ohio and Scioto Rivers has seen human occupancy since Pre-Columbian times. The Shawnees lived in a village on the low-lying land west of the mouth of the Scioto River from 1745-1780. A town called Alexandria was platted in that same area in 1799 but was abandoned in 1814 due to flooding. The present community of Portsmouth was established on the higher ground across the Scioto River on the eastern side of the river in 1801. The town was laid out on a grid plan on the points of the compass, and platted in 1803. After the opening of the Ohio Canal in 1832, Portsmouth became an important port city and transfer point for goods brought from the north by barge for transfer to Ohio River vessels. Iron and shoe manufacturing became important after the Civil War.

During 1981 the Miami University faculty, art museum staff, and students and the community at large implemented a joint project to document old Portsmouth. The measured drawings, transmitted with this data as photographs, became the focus of an exhibition at the museum. The exhibition also included photographs. A catalogue, Portsmouth: Architecture in an Ohio River Town, was published to accompany the exhibition.

Source: Miami University Art Museum. Portsmouth: Architecture in an Ohio River Town. Oxford, Ohio, 1982.

Historian: Marion Schlefer, June, 1988